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CASE STUDY

Economic Boost for Daman Farmers

A karez project provides water to farmers for their crops



Photo: USAID/ODG/CADG

A fertile field grows its crops in Daman District. Today, the karezes have the capacity to deliver irrigation water to hundreds of farms in the district.

CHALLENGE The turmoil of the past 30 years has taken its toll on rural Afghanistan. Daman District relies heavily on agriculture to sustain its economy, but due to the destructive forces of war, nature, and neglect, its karez system – an essential source of groundwater – had fallen into disrepair. The municipality lacked the necessary resources to address infrastructure reconstruction and maintenance. Without urgent rehabilitation, resident farmers and nomads would see their only source of livelihood continue to degrade.

INITIATIVE After a series of 18 meetings, government and community leaders selected eight karez systems for rehabilitation, and the installation of 11 hand pumps and one solar-powered pump for an existing well. Local leaders agreed to the importance and urgency of this project, which would provide economic benefits for the residents of this agricultural district.

RESULTS The project employed more than 1,300 laborers, which provided an important income injection into the local economy. The laborers removed 11,000 m³ of silt from 62 karez wells to allow the underground water to flow unimpeded. Approximately 250 refugee families have returned to their farms, and 1,100 ha of land have been rejuvenated with wheat, melons, pomegranates, and other produce. Local leaders have gained confidence to conduct more projects in the future.

This USAID-funded karez rehabilitation project, implemented by Central Asia Development Group, provided much needed employment for Daman residents. More importantly, it brings agriculture back to life and gives an economic boost to the region by providing farmers with irrigation water for their crops.